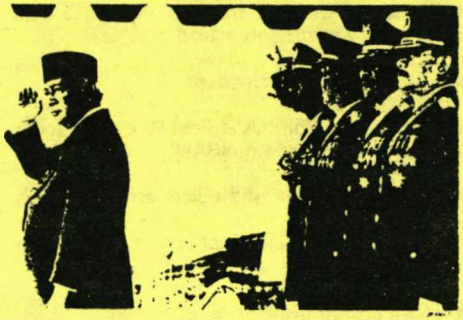
TL 206

Stop arming Indonesia

Stop Britain supporting a repressive and aggressive regime

Since 1978, Britain has been a major supplier of armaments, military aircraft and naval vessels to Indonesia. Yet, the repressive Indonesian military regime is conducting colonial wars in East Timor, West Papua and Aceh.



Suharto and his generals

In Indonesia, protest against authoritarian government and injustice is met with arrests, maltreatment and subversion trials. Millions of former political prisoners are denied their civil and political rights. More than two dozen long-term political prisoners were executed in the late 1980s. There are no independent political parties; there is no such thing as a free press.

Indonesia's armed forces equipped with arms from the UK and other western powers have spearheaded repression and the denial of human rights ever since General (now President) Suharto seized power in 1965. Army-instigated killings in 1965 and 1966 left an estimated one million people dead in Suharto's drive to annihilate the mass-based leftwing movement. Generals still brag about their role in the killings. No-one has been brought to justice for these crimes.

Throughout the 1980s, the armed forces conducted armed assaults on people defending their basic rights. In 1983-84, army death-squads murdered more than 4,000 people in an 'anti-crime drive'. Over a hundred Muslim demonstrators were shot dead by troops in Tanjung Priok, a district of Jakarta, in September 1984. In February 1989, a large number of people were shot dead and many more injured or driven from their homes in Lampung, South Sumatra. In many parts of Java, troops have been used against people who try to defend their land against seizure by the government.

East Timor was invaded by Indonesia in December 1975 and is still an occupied country, despite numerous UN resolutions calling for Indonesia's withdrawal and upholding East Timor's right to self-determination. At least 200,000 Timorese, a third of the population, have died in Indonesia's war. A major offensive was launched against the armed resistance in late 1990. Peaceful demonstrations by East Timorese youth are brutally suppressed and the security forces use detention without trial and torture to intimidate those who take part in unarmed opposition to Indonesian rule. After the Gulf War, parallels were drawn with Indonesia's invasion of East Timor. In 1991, a Times editorial and a Council of Europe resolution called for an arms embargo on Indonesia.

West Papua was annexed by Indonesia in 1963, against the wishes of its people: since then at least 100,000 West Papuans have been killed. More than 10,000 West Papuans sought refuge in Papua New Guinea in 1984, most of whom are still too afraid to return home. West Papua's minerals and tropical forests are being exploited for Jakarta's benefit and the land forcibly expropriated for settlers from Java and other parts of Indonesia. There has been no internationally acceptable act of self-determination. Troops are used against a well-organised armed resistance and hundreds of people are serving long prison sentences on subversion charges.

Aceh, North Sumatra has been witness to massacres since mid-1990. The death toll by March 1991 was at least 2,000 - some estimates say 10,000. The killings occurred on the orders of the regional military who told troops and civilians to shoot anyone suspected of opposing Indonesian rule. A movement for an independent Aceh has been active in the region since the 1970s.

Although British governments are well aware of Indonesia's wars and the consistent pattern of human rights violations perpetrated by the Suharto regime, they have pushed hard to make the UK Indonesia's main arms supplier. The government argues that all countries "have the right to secure the means of their own defence" without explaining why Britain sells arms to a country that is engaged in wars of aggression.

The first big arms deal, for the sale of Hawk ground-attack aircraft, was concluded in 1978, under a Labour government. Prime Minister Thatcher's visit to Indonesia in 1985 helped to promote new arms deals, paving the way for the supply of high-technology weapons and the transfer of technology to Indonesia's own fast-growing arms industry.

British frigates have gone to the Indonesian navy which takes part in operations in East Timor and West Papua. The army relies heavily on armoured personnel carriers supplied by the UK in the 1970s and since then refurbished by a British company to make them more suitable for anti-guerrilla operations in mountainous terrain.

British Aerospace leads the field among Britain's arms exporters to Indonesia. In June 1991 it announced a major new deal to collaborate with Indonesia in the production of Hawk aircraft. Other companies include Vosper Thornycroft, Plessey, Ferranti and Marconi.

Since Suharto seized power, British companies have sold Indonesia:

★ 3 Tribal class navy frigates [V. Thornycroft]

★ 20 Hawk advanced trainer/strike aircraft [BAe]

★ Rapier air defence missiles - [BAe] 3 deals since 1985 worth £340 million

★ Seawolf missile launchers

★ Five Battery Command Post Processor (computer software) systems [BAe]

★ Saladin, Saracen and Ferret armoured cars

★ MRNS 9000 marine radar and navigator simulators

★ Training and transfer of technology.

Under negotiation: more Hawks, Rapiers, warships and Tornados.

Arms supplied by the UK support aggression and oppression. The British Government's claim that they are for legitimate defence is indefensible.

Help stop this killer trade!

* Tell others about Indonesia's human rights record and British arms sales.
* Call for an arms embargo. Lobby your MP.
* Write to your local press and call radio phone-in programmes.

Information about Indonesia, East Timor, West Papua and Aceh is available from TAPOL, the Indonesia Human Rights Campaign. The Campaign Against Arms Trade (CAAT) monitors information about British arms sales to human rights violators. CAAT works for an end to all British weapons exports and for the conversion of arms manufacturing to socially-useful production.

For more information please complete the form below and send to:
TAPOL, 111 Northwood Road, Thornton Heath, Surrey CR7 8HW. tel: 081 771-2904 fax: 081 653-0322.
CAAT, 11 Goodwin Street, London N4 3HQ. tel and fax: 071 281-0297.

☐ Please send me ____ copies of this leaflet.
☐ Please send me more information about TAPOL
☐ Please send me information on British arms sales, the alternatives, and CAAT
☐ I enclose a donation of £____ towards the cost of the campaign.

Name and address: .....

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CAMPAIGN AGAINST ARMS TRADE